PFLAG
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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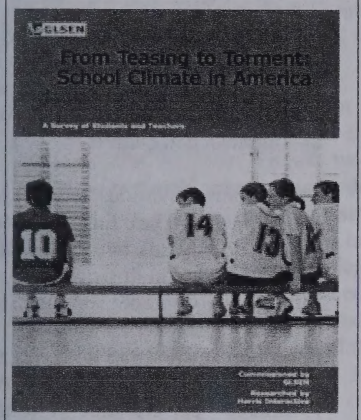
Keeping Families Strong

November, 2005

Gay-Straight Clubs Combat Harassment



October 11, 2005 - New York – GLSEN, or the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, today announced the results of a new survey conducted on its behalf by Harris Interactive® titled "From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America, A Survey of Students and Teachers."

The national survey of over 3,400 students aged 13-18 and over 1,000 secondary school teachers, explores students' and teachers' experiences with bullying and harassment, and their attitudes about this serious problem in America's schools.

The survey finds that LGBT students are three times as likely as non-LGBT students to say that they do not feel safe at school (22% vs. 7%) and 90% of LGBT students (vs. 62% of non-LGBT teens) have been harassed or assaulted during the past year.

Gay-Straight Alliance Clubs, which have existed at the college level for a decade, are being formed by students in high schools to promote safer schools. Of 61 clubs in Colorado registered on GLSEN's website, four are in El Paso County: Air Academy High School H.O.P. E. club, and GSAs at Lewis Palmer, Palmer, and Sand Creek.

GSAs have also been formed at Fountain-Ft. Carson, Widefield, New Horizon and Fountain Valley School.

In response to the formation of a

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Jean Hodges Elected to National PFLAG Council

Congratulations to Jean Hodges of Boulder, who has been elected to the PFLAG Regional Directors Council as the representative of the Mountain West Region.

A co-founder of the PFLAG Boulder Chapter in 1993, Jean has served as the chapter's President or Co-President since 1996. She and her husband, Jack, have three children, one of whom is gay, and three grandchildren. In 1999, Jean received the Equality Colorado Pride Award and in 2003, the Colorado HRC Paul Hunter Award for her outstanding contributions to GLBT equality.

Jean also chairs the Colorado PFLAG coalition which meets quarterly to foster communication among the seven PFLAG chapters in Colorado.

NOVEMBER PFLAG CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday
November 15, 2005
7:00 P.M.

Program:
High School Gay-Straight Alliance Clubs

Guests:
Lorri Crews, advisor, and members of Fountain Valley School and Fountain-Ft. Carson High School Gay-Straight Alliances

Plus: small group discussion and Report on Palmer High School Gay-Straight Alliance Students vs. School District 11 Board of Education.

The Dwelling Place
508 North Tejon Street
Everyone is welcome

Coming Out ...

as gay, lesbian bisexual, transgender or as a straight supportive person is an act of bravery, authenticity and openness.

Whether it's for the first time ever, or for the first time today—coming out is the most important thing you will do all day.

- Human Rights Campaign
Coming Out Project

This newsletter is published by the Colorado Springs Chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).

PFLAG Mission Statement:
PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) persons, their families and friends through:
√ **support**, to cope with an adverse society,
√ **education**, to enlighten an ill-informed public, and
√ **advocacy**, to end discrimination and secure equal civil rights.

Holiday Cards Support PFLAG

PFLAG is once again partnering with OutVite.com, a leading fine stationery and announcement web retailer to the GLBT community, to offer holiday cards that feature the PFLAG logo and mission statement.

Outvite.com will contribute 40% of the proceeds to PFLAG, and as well as 20% of the proceeds for any other purchase made through this link. To view the cards and place an order, visit website at: www.Out Vite .com/PFLAG.

GSA (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)
GSA at Palmer High School in 2003, the Colorado Springs District 11 School Board withdrew recognition of all non-curricular clubs in the district.

With A.C.L.U. assistance, several students and parents filed an anti-discrimination lawsuit in Federal Court in Denver, which is moving toward trial. In March, the court denied a motion for a preliminary injunction which would have forced the school district to recognize the GSA until a trial is held.

By contrast, LGBT students at Colorado College apparently feel safer. One member of the gay-straight alliance at CC commented that acceptance of gays and lesbians is pretty well the norm. "Our focus now", she said, "is on raising our awareness of and support for the transgender and intersexed community."

Gay into Straight America: A Journey of Two Women and a Poodle

Dotti Berry and Robynne Sapp of Bellingham, WA, are about to embark on a yearlong journey called Gay into Straight America. They are heading out in their purple suburban with their dog for an adventure that will create meaningful connections with hundreds of people across the country. Dotti and Roby are committed to talking with people who are "wrestling" with their understanding of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) persons.

During their journey, they will be speaking to groups and organizations such as PFLAG chapters, churches, high schools, gay-straight alliance clubs and colleges and universities. Additionally, they plan to reach out to their own community of gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, questioning and ally persons who, like others in society, often don't have a foundation for understanding transgender and intersex persons.

Dotti is a Life Coach who is finishing her doctorate work in Human Sexuality and Roby is a photographer and specialist in the medical research field. They were legally married in the spring of 2004 in Oregon, but their license was annulled a year later by the state.

Their commitment to take this yearlong journey has been brewing for a long time. It was originally ignited by their involvement with SoulForce, which utilizes nonviolent resistance to raise awareness of spiritual violence against GLBT persons.

PFLAG to Sponsor GAYTINO!

PFLAG Denver and PFLAG Boulder, in their continuing outreach to the Latino/a community, announce their sponsorship of two performances of GAYTINO!

In GAYTINO!, a professional actor and producer Dan Guerrero takes us on a remarkable fifty-year journey from the back of the bus to the front of American pop culture.

Touching, hilarious and absolutely one-of-a-kind, this sixty-plus Chicano brings his two fascinating worlds together in this riveting solo show— funny and not so funny stories, and "canciones en español". A father-son relationship and a treasured boyhood friendship drive the 75-minute performance through decades of Chicano history and the gay experience viewed from a unique perspective.

The entire proceeds of the Nov. 19th Denver show will go to El Futuro Community Center, the first program in the state dedicated to providing service and support to gay and bisexual Latino men. All proceeds from the Nov. 18th Boulder show will go to the OASOS program supporting GLBTQ youth in the Boulder area.. (See p. 4 for details)

In addition, Mr. Guerrero will be the speaker at the Boulder PFLAG meeting Thursday, September 17th in a program titled "The Cost (and Benefits) of Being Gay and Latino".

PFLAG Boulder meets at First United Methodist Church, 14th and Spruce, Boulder. Sharing time begins as 7 p.m., program at 8 p.m. All are welcome.

When Your Child Comes Out As Gay
The Thoughts of the Parent of a Gay Child

October 10, 2005

It has been ten years since Dan told my spouse, Linda and me that he was gay. I remember it clearly. We were having dinner at Bert & Ernie's, and after dinner we went to the civic center to hear Bernie Segal. I don't remember the program; I was stunned with the news I had just received.

Dan had a great future ahead of him. He was a graduate of CMR High School with a degree in film and TV from Montana State University. He was working as news photographer for KFBB when he made the decision to go to seminary, to train for ordained ministry. When he left for Denver I was filled with pride and hope. (It was during his first year at Iliff School of Theology that Dan found a supportive community in which he could be honest with himself and his girl friend that he was gay.) I too am an ordained minister, and my son was following in our family tradition of a church vocation. He was proving in many ways that it was more than a calling, Dan had the gifts and graces for ministry.

I was afraid, and I was angry. All I could envision was that our dreams and hopes of his being an ordained minister would be stripped from him because of his sexual orientation. Our church has taken a stand against homosexuality since 1968. Its rules say that homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teachings, and bars "practicing" homosexuals from ministry.

I had some background with homosexual people and issues, but it was when Dan said that he was gay that homosexuality became personal. To begin with Linda and I were very private with this information. This was to protect Dan. When ever we did 'come out' or talk about it we in turn outed Dan as gay. The consequences of outing him could be life threatening.

What did I do wrong as a father figure? That and many other questions forced me to inform myself as best I could about homosexuality. I looked at the scientific data and learned much. I looked at the Bible, and studied the often quoted texts to discover what the Bible really said and did not say about homosexuality. As a seminary trained person I already had the understanding of the Bible as historical literature, and that as a Christian 'God's Word' was to be found in the life and teaching of Jesus. We do not know what causes homosexuality, but we know that it is a reality. We don't need to know all the answers to know how we should treat homosexual persons. We treat them with compassion and hospitality.

Linda and I found our way to PFLAG, a national organization of parents, friends and families of lesbians and gays. At PFLAG we found a supportive community, who understood our fears, and gave us a place to vent our frustrations. Their support, educational material, and their willingness to be an advocate for Dan and our family were very helpful. Linda and I are active in PFLAG at the local, state, and national levels.

What about the church? Obviously the church has been an important part of my life, and it is the source and cause of much of the divisiveness about the homosexuality. With the issue of Dan's homosexuality I found the church marginally helpful. The little help that I did find was negated by church policy, thus my church is my greatest disappointment. Silence was expected for the sake of unity. If we talk about it or do anything publicly to promote the understanding of homosexuality people will leave the church. Homosexuality is always silenced for unity. In many ways I have left the church. It has come down to choosing my kid or the church.

Dan has a wonderful story. His first assignment as a clergy person was as campus pastor at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. It was the spring after Matthew Shepherd's murder, and I was scared. My fears were quickly eased as Dan made many friends and found Laramie a friendly and supportive community in which to do ministry. We visited Dan several times during his four years in Laramie and at UW. We met his friends, had coffee with his klatch, and worshiped with him at his church. I always came away with pride, but the fear for his safety always lingered.

Dan is ordained as a minister and is senior pastor of the United Methodist Church in Kaiula Kona, Hawaii. How did he do that? He proved to his peers that his gifts and graces for ministry were more important than his sexual orientation. He has agreed with the church to be celibate, the loophole that gets him by church law. That commitment means that he can never have the support of a life long partner. He will always go home to an empty bed. His church is growing, and the community has accepted him, and supports his ministry.

Linda and I have both been active in the Reconciling Ministry Network of the United Methodist Church. This

(Continued on page 4)

BULLETIN BOARD

Nov. 12—United Court of the Pikes Peak Empire Coronation 30. Sheraton Hotel. UCPPE has sometimes been called the Rotary Club of the gay community. For more information see www.ucppe.org

Nov. 15 - Meet the League of Women Voters Carnegie Room, Penrose Public Library, 2 N. Cascade Avenue, 5:30—7:30– p.m. Reservations: Call Mary at 684-9846 by November 13.

Nov. 18 GAYTINO! Old Main Theater on the C.U. Campus in Boulder, 7:30 p.m. For ticket information, call Boulder PFLAG (303) 444-8164.

Nov. 19—GAYTINO! El Centro Su Teatro 4725 High Street at 8:00 p.m. To reserve tickets, call Denver PFLAG, (303) 573-5861 weekday afternoons between 1-5 p.m. Cost: $20 or $25 at the door. Students $8 or $15 at the door. Credit cards accepted.

Nov 17-20—Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference, Seattle. The Annual G&L Leadership Conference, presented with the International Network of Lesbian and Gay Officials (INLGO), offers senior-level, openly LGBT leaders a unique opportunity to speak out in a unified voice on the challenges they face today. Information at http://www.victoryinstitute.org/conference.

Dec. 9-11—Denver Gay Men's Chorus Holiday Concerts (9th and 10th at Mountview Presbyterian Church, Denver, and 11th iat First United Methodist Church in Boulder to benefit Boulder PFLAG) This vibrant group has over 100 voices and is well worth a trip to Denver! For tickets call 1-866-464-2626

When Your Child Comes Out As Gay (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

is a non official organization of the church working for ecclesiastical rights of homosexual persons with in the denomination. We have served on the Parents Reconciling Network which is a group committed to supporting the parents of homosexual children. We have found this important because we know from experience that the church is not a helpful friendly environment.

I have also testified at Montana State Legislature on behalf of gay issues. The gay agenda is the American agenda of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all the people. Because of that the civil rights of homosexual people is a necessary justice issue.

In public I now introduce myself as the parent of six kids. One of them is gay and the other five are different. In our family all of us are uniquely different. We are all loveable human beings. Dan is no more or no less wonderful than his siblings. He is gay, and we are proud of him in every way.

Do I wish that he wasn't gay? At times, yes, but I would not want him any different than he is. I do wish that I didn't have the continued fear of his vocational security and his physical safety. Will I out him once too often, and to the wrong person? Will some one choose him to be the victim of their homophobia and anger? This is always a fear.

John S. Lewis
PFLAG Montana State Council President

This was written for National Coming Out Day, October 11, 2005, sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign.

Support Colorado Springs PFLAG—Become a Member

You can join at any time of the year. The current membership year extends from October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006.

Name(s) of Member(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ **Zip Code:** _____

Home Phone: _____ **Work Phone:** _____

e-mail: _____

___New member ___Renewing member

___ Regular Membership	$ 30
___ Supporting Member—Silver	40
___ Supporting Member—Gold	60
___ Supporting Member—Platinum	90

Amount Enclosed $_____

This year our chapter must contribute $15.00 for each paid membership to the PFLAG national office to support it in its mission.

Make checks payable to Colorado Springs PFLAG and mail to P.O. Box 10076, Colorado Springs, CO 80932. Membership fees and contributions are tax deductible. All information will remain confidential. PFLAG is a 501(C) 3 nonprofit organization.